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## Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our Father, the way, the truth, and the life, lead us to Your truth. Keep us from twisting the truth to conceal our mistakes. Keep us from evading the truth we do not wish to see. Keep us from silencing the truth because we are afraid of people.

Infuse Your Senators today with a passion for truth that will save them from false words or cowardly silence.

Teach us all to speak Your truth in love.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in just a few minutes, at 10 a.m., the Senate will proceed to the vote on invoking cloture on the motion to proceed to the small business health plan bill. Chairman ENZI is here, and there will be a few minutes for closing remarks before

that vote. If cloture is invoked, I hope we will be able to proceed to the bill today and begin debate on the substance of the legislation.

Today, the two party policy luncheons will occur between the hours of 12:30 and 2:15 p.m. Once we determine when we will be able to proceed to the small business health plan bill, we will then set up a recess to accommodate those two meetings.

### HEALTH INSURANCE MARKETPLACE MODERNIZATION AND AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2006—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration on the motion to proceed on S. 1955.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 417, a bill (S. 1955) to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Public Health Service Act to expand health care access and reduce costs through the creation of small business health plans and through modernization of the health insurance marketplace, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. shall be equally divided between the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. ENZI, and the Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. KENNEDY, or his designee.

The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I am here this morning to ask this body to support the motion to proceed to the debate. All we are voting on is whether we are going to get to debate, not whether we are going to have health insurance for small businesses. But if this vote does not get 60 votes, we will not have the opportunity in this Congress to see whether we can help out small businesses across this country.

The bill before us will provide for small businesses to be able to join across State lines to negotiate against the insurance companies with enough

power to make a difference. This is something which the small businesses have been asking for for almost 15 years. In the last 12 years, it has passed the House eight times but has never even gotten out of committee in the Senate until this year. The reason it got out of committee is because we have drastically changed the bill. We are not talking about the old association health plans we had in the past. This is one which has had some modifications that have been helped with insurance companies and State insurance commissioners. It still keeps the power of oversight and consumer protection in the hands of the State insurance commissioners, but it does allow the ability to unify things so that we can get across State lines.

How is it doing? Well, the Washington Post says it went too far. The Wall Street Journal says it didn't go far enough. So maybe we are somewhere right there in the middle. But unless we get to debate this issue, we will never know until we can get through the motion to proceed and possibly 30 hours of still debating whether we are going to debate before we ever get to a motion. So I am hoping that this morning we can pass this motion to proceed.

I can't believe that any Senator here hasn't heard from enough small businessmen that he wouldn't allow us to proceed to the debate. I am hoping that following that motion to proceed to debate, we can limit the hours of debating that particular motion and get on with the substance of trying to perfect a bill.

In my 9 years in the Senate, I have never seen a perfect bill. I am not saying this is a perfect bill. I am saying it is one that has come out of compromise, long discussions, and has moved away from the point of huge objection on the Senate side to less objection on the Senate side. It is a bill that can be worked out, can be passed, and can have a significant difference for

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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